ALLEGIANCES

Outsiders have been returning to this world for more than a century but the general public still regards them as little more than legends. This is only possible due to the existence and influence of a number of organizations and societies that wish to keep the Outside a carefully guarded secret. Secrecy is about the only thing all of these groups can agree on, however. Exposure might threaten their monopoly on supernatural power, and very few want to upset the delicate niches they’ve created for themselves. As a result, they struggle and compete with each other in the shadows while remaining somewhat united against any threat to their shared secret.

# The Bureau of Outsider Affairs (BOA)

The United States government first began documenting Outsider incursion in the late 19th century, but had no immediate organized response to it. By the 1940’s it became clear that supernatural powers could translate to military and economic advantages. Fearing supernatural competition from both Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia the U.S. created the **Bureau of Outsider Affairs**. BOA’s mission has been to oversee Outsider immigration, recruit individuals with supernatural power, and to protect U.S. citizens from supernatural threats.

The Bureau managed to extricate itself from most government oversight after World War 2. Since then its mission has become more vague and it’s suspected that it maintains a number of unseemly alliances for which it occasionally engages in acts of foreign espionage.

# Cirque

So many peoples and nations make up Europe that in the last century there have been hundreds of secret societies and government agencies all monitoring and meddling in Outsider activity. Probably the most successful was the British ministry known as Circus. During the Cold War, Circus allied itself with many different secret societies to effectively counter the influence of the Soviet Komitet 13.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was a desire for a larger and more unified approach to dealing with Outsider problems. Circus was expanded to encompass many of its smaller allies to form an umbrella organization for the entirety of Europe known as **Cirque**. Cirque seemed like it had a bright future, but two decades have changed many opinions. It’s becoming an increasingly Balkanized bureaucratic nightmare that only persists because Insiders and Outsiders are more afraid of what will happen if Cirque fails and dissolves.

# Komitet 13

For a prominent world power like the Soviet Union, the return of supernatural creatures to this world was both a threat and an opportunity. After all, with the careful application of magical powers a few Outsiders could overthrow or seize control of a nation. A secret **Committee** was formed for the purpose of learning as much about the Outsiders as possible. Komitet 13 (K13), as it became known, was quite effective at recruiting or exterminating a great number of Outsiders during the Cold War.

When the Soviet Union dissolved, Komitet 13 lost its funding and its oversight. Rather than fade into obscurity, K13 used its contacts with organized crime to go underground. Now it continues to enforce a semblance of law and order in its old territory while selling its services in espionage and investigation to the highest bidders.

# The Ministry for Extraordinary Citizens

Slightly before the Great Exodus, the Qin Dynasty founded the Celestial Ministry to monitor and regulate the actions of spirits and supernatural creatures within its borders. To be effective at its mission, the Ministry centered itself near one of the most active gateways to the Outside, in the Sideways realm known as the Yellow Springs. Not only was this gateway sealed after the rise of the Host, but its Sideways realm was also cut-off from the Inside.

After two thousand years Yellow Springs and its gateway have become unsealed and surprisingly the Celestial Ministry has survived and grown into a dense metropolis inhabited by ghosts and Outsiders! Having rejoined the Chinese government as the **Ministry for Extraordinary Citizens**, it hopes to bring its ancient laws back to a chaotic and unenlightened world.

# The Mission

The **Mission** is a loose coalition of religious societies dedicated to collecting and sharing intelligence on the miraculous and supernatural events of the world. Many of these societies were formed to identify and eradicate threats from Outside, but over time the Mission has evolved to more peaceful purposes investigative and philosophical purposes.

Increasingly clarity about the nature of Outsiders and Outside is creating more theological questions than it answers. Mythical realms such as Asgard and Elysium now appear to be real, but what of Heaven and Hell? Where are the angels that visited Abraham? To most Outsiders these are nothing but human inventions, but there are still growing reports of heavenly visions and miracles from all over the world. Something even bigger is out there, and the Mission’s religious conviction drives them to find it.

# Asylum

Asylum is an open political movement and an umbrella conspiracy active all over the world. In general, the supernatural community sees Asylum as a kind of political party or social movement. Just about anyone can join Asylum provided they agree with their philosophy of creating a world where Insiders and Outsiders can peacefully coexist and thrive. Asylum believes that a careful and respectful relationship between Inside and Outside can be good for every being involved. Some of them look forward to a time when such a relationship might even be revealed to the public, but all understand that to end secrecy now would be disastrous.

This is, however, not the entire truth. Somewhere within Asylum’s loose affiliation of lone activists, local action groups and professional networks is a driven, well-organized core that coordinates and dispatches its members whenever and wherever they are needed. For its core members, Asylum selects people who have a combination of competence, discretion, and a demonstrated sense for the welfare of others. Individual candidates have these qualities in different levels.

The core of Asylum works mostly through local cell structures that it creates through careful recruitment and introduction. They are trained to divulge as little information about Asylum’s core as possible. This occasionally calls for misdirecting anyone who attempts to pry, including their own personal contacts and allies. Cells are generally formed either as long-term intelligence and maintenance crews given responsibility over a region, or as short-term task forces designed to solve more urgent problems.

When it comes to regional responsibilities, Asylum requires that long-term core members collect information from each of their respective areas of influence and be on the lookout for any possible threat to both human and supernatural societies. When they identify a possible threat they are given a great deal of discretion in dealing with it. Although as trusted agents it's assumed that they will act in a way that minimizes harm, the unfortunate reality is that sometimes cells have to lie, steal, or kill in order to achieve their noble goals.

One of the less exciting day-to-day things that Asylum does is to shepherd lost supernatural beings or accidentally awakened humans into contact with an organization that will best adopt and support them. Agents usually fulfill this function as "concerned neighbors" and sometimes make use of their connections through Asylum to introduce newcomers to the right people. Another regular duty is their work to keep bad sentiments or disagreements between Insiders and Outsiders from bubbling over into overt conflicts. When such conflicts do happen, Asylum core members do the best they can to keep it from spreading. Accomplishing these objectives frequently requires an influential position within – or at least ingratiating themselves among – the local movers and shakers.

What Asylum knows that everyone else doesn't is that there is dangerous faction out there that shrouds itself in incredibly tight, magical secrecy: the Host.

# The Host

Whenever egregious supernatural power rises up and creates obvious conflict, one single power has always appeared and restored balance, quickly, brutally and with incredible power. Without fail and without remorse the Host comes in and cleans up irrespective of who is to blame and who gets caught in the crossfire. The heavy hand of the Host spares nothing: destroyed buildings are restored, memories are rewritten and entire lives simply disappear.

While Asylum doesn't try to keep the Host's existence a secret, no one outside of Asylum’s core seems able to hold on to information or memory of the Host’s actions. Consequently most other humans, Insiders and Outsiders don't believe the Host exists. Even if it did, they reason, the truth is probably much more mundane.

In recent years there have been several occasions where large groups of people in supernatural communities went missing. Weeks or months later a few would eventually turn up dead or alive but with no or completely different memories of who they are. Stranger still, the different memories would be backed up with documents, photographs and even witnesses with similarly doctored memories and pasts. As the only group of beings able to even see this is happening, Asylum believes that the Host is responsible for these types of events.

To avoid The Host’s mysterious crackdowns, Asylum tries to find problems and deal with them first. However morally complicated the Asylum solution might seem, the Host's reaction would be that much more extreme. Unfortunately, the secrecy and misdirection between Asylum’s core and its public face has only served to confuse the matter further; leading a few to suspect that Asylum itself may be involved. On the other hand, rumors have circulated about how many Asylum core cells have mysteriously vanished. Core members are asking: is the Host targeting Asylum?